

★ THE ELBERTA ALERT ★

*free!

vol. 101 no. 3

A Community News Organ

Weds., May 16, 2012

OCCUPY ELBERTA BEACH?

ORV TRAFFIC ON ELBERTA BEACH got particularly frisky the weekend of April 21-22, leading to a rash of phone calls to Ken Bonney and Diane Jenks from concerned property owners and beachgoers. Reports of drivers attempting to scale the bluff as well as driving across the shoreline dune and beach prompted Diane Jenks, acting as council president pro-tem, to instruct Ken to install a gate across Lakeside Boulevard just south of the last house, in an effort to temporarily forestall more damage (Diane did not return a call for comment on this story). The road closure sparked outrage among some members of the community. A Facebook page was set up on May 2 that documents the situation in photographs and video,

including images of two tickets issued by the DNR during that particularly active April weekend. At press time the page had 61 fans.

On April 27, the *Alert* spoke with Justin Vanderlinde, the DNR officer in charge of enforcing the law against ORV activity on Elberta Beach. Vanderlinde said he couldn't yet comment on whether he's ticketed people recently. He said the amount of ORV activity on the beach was at about normal levels for this time of year. He said ticketing and fines were more prevalent years ago when there was more manpower for patrol. Vanderlinde said he has all of Benzie County as his territory and this time of year is particularly busy for a game warden.

continues on page 4



LEFT: A DNR map shows the protected area of critical dunes that covers most of Elberta. The Sand Dune Management and Protection Act of 1976 (revised 1994) is a double-edged sword: it keeps our beach pristine and undeveloped (the things that make it so attractive) but requires that we treat it very gently. In addition, much of the dunes are privately owned, and the owners are not required to allow access to areas off Lakeside Blvd. ABOVE LEFT: Looking north, tire tracks and footprints on the left, the official road along the tree line on the right. ABOVE RIGHT: Looking south about a week earlier, in late April, during the worst off-roading, it's hard to tell where the road is. PHOTOS BY JENNIFER WILKINS

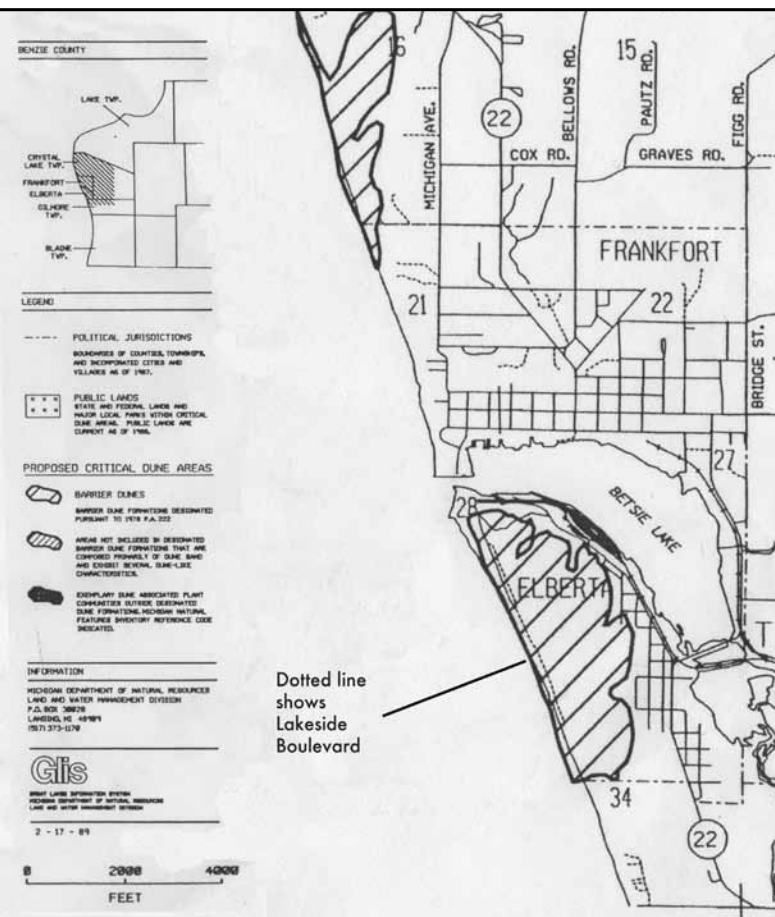
Putney Land-Use Permit Hearing Rescheduled for May 30, 7 pm

ON MAY 4, COUNCIL held a special meeting. They reviewed and approved legal counsel Ed Roy's letter to the Department of Civil Rights (which is investigating the Village Council in relation to its handling of the Putney permit application), appointed Linda Manville to replace Ken Holmes on the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals, and selected a new hearing date (above) for the Zoning Board of Appeals to determine whether the zoning administrator's decisions concerning Loy F. Putney's application for a land use permit should be upheld or reversed. According to the notice published by Sharyn Bower in the *Record-Patriot* May 9, anyone may appear or testify at this hearing, either in person or through an agent or attorney. Written responses should be addressed

to the Elberta Village Zoning Board of Appeals, PO Box 8, Elberta, MI 49628.

In the meanwhile the Putney team have filed a motion to be heard at 3 pm on May

continues on page 4



Dotted line shows Lakeside Boulevard

Mayfair Tavern to Remain Closed for Season

With Memorial Day and summer fast approaching, we keenly feel the absence of the Mayfair Tavern from our local hangout options. According to Heather Hanley-Frary, the minority shareholder in the business and general manager, the soonest the Mayfair might reopen would be October. Almost all the staff have found other work for the summer; several will be working at Crystal Downs.

State Savings Bank, which holds the loan on the property, is set to acquire it July 19 if another buyer

isn't found or Jim Goldman, the majority owner, does not redeem it. State Savings Bank would not comment on the matter other than to confirm the redemption date.

According to Tom Stoltmann, the Mayfair Tavern had become profitable under Heather's management. Rumor has it there are two committed buyers who would like to retain the entire staff if an agreement is reached. Negotiations and transfer of licenses, not to mention what it would take to set up the restaurant again, will likely take months.



ELBERTA FARMERS' MARKET

Open for the Season ~~~~~ Thursday, May 17

7:30 am - 12 noon

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2012 DECADE ANNIVERSARY
SATURDAY JUNE 23rd STARTING AT NOON

The Elberta Solstice Committee is seeking Arts and Crafts, Farmers Market and Food Vendors for the 2012 Summer Solstice Festival. Please email Jen Wilkins at smiljjen10@yahoo.com with your address and an application and information will be sent to you. The Solstice Committee would like to thank past and future Sponsors, Vendors and Volunteers for making The Solstice Festival an unforgettable event!

Exercising Authority

By Emily Votruba

DIANE JENKS PRESIDED in Reg Manville's absence. She announced to the public in attendance that the board had been advised by their attorney not to discuss any pending litigation. "This meeting will pertain to agenda items only. The Bay Valley Inn project will be discussed at our public hearing on April 25." And it was, briefly. See page 1.

Linda Manville proposed adjustments to the March minutes as follows: Art Melendez resigned from Parks and Rec and the Solstice Committee. During public comment, the paragraph ends with "no more micromanaging of the office." An additional part was left out, in which Linda asked if this applied only to her or to anyone else at the table and R. Manville replied that it applies to all council members.

PUBLIC COMMENT Blair Moss spoke on his candidacy for sheriff. He was born and raised in Frankfort and has lived here all his life, attending Benzie Central High School. He spent 23 years in law enforcement in Benzie County, in marine patrol and cor-

rections, and has done some coaching. "It's my time to step up. We know as coaches that one person can't do it all. I've asked [Frankfort police chief] Keith Redder to be on my team, and I think we make a winning team. Come August 7 [the primary] we need your support. If there's anything you want to talk to me about, I'd be happy to talk to you."

COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S REPORT Marcia Stobie said the two brainstorming meetings regarding the Council on Aging were each attended by more than 100 people. What services do we provide and what do we need to provide? One example of a need was dental care for indigent seniors. "Other counties have clinics, so we're going to look into that," said Stobie. Improved communication and a volunteer database and referral system was also discussed. "A lot of agencies and different groups cover our area and we need to pull it all together. We need to be able to provide [seniors and their caregivers] with a comprehensive list of available services." A dedication ceremony for the new Crystal Lake boat launch will be held June 7 at 12:30 pm at the county building, followed at 2 pm with a tour of the site.

APPROVAL OF BILLS Total receipts: \$45,631.44. Expenditures: accounts payable: \$37,336.33; payroll, \$10,904.71; Solstice, \$281.50. Total expenditures: \$48,522.54. Linda said no budget information was included in trustees' packets for either Parks and Rec or Solstice. She

would like the board to see statements each month that include balances, revenues, and expenditures for Parks and Rec and Solstice, so if the commission comes before council with a request we know how much money they have in their account.

KEN BONNEY/DPW Ken and Charlie Hendershott have cleared brush and weeds from the Mini Pond area. Council approved without a vote Ken's request to hire a few guys from around the neighborhood part-time and just above minimum wage to help him and Charlie Hendershott take down the building on the former Koch Fuel property given to the Village by Scott Gest. The building will be down and moved before Luedtke's begins work on dismantling the car ferry aprons.

WATER & SEWER Ken Holmes said BLUA stills lacks a new engineer. Septic tanks are coming in by the truckload, helping offset the \$140K per year operating cost for the plant. "[BLUA] probably has enough capacity for two towns like Frankfort-Elberta and we need to use it." A tank that's usually used all summer long and sometimes gets a smell on it will not be used this year, which will save about \$1,500/mo., according to Ken.

MARINA PARK/FARMERS' MARKET Bill Soper said he would like to see the Mini Pond docks removed. "I think they're in poor shape and it's a liability issue for the Village, and besides that, they're an eyesore, and it's the first thing people see when they come into the village." Bill said the pilings go down 60

feet to bedrock so they have to stay, and he would like to see a horse-shoe-shaped walkway around the inlet, which he thinks would be a big draw. Ken Holmes said the docks have been there a long time and "There's no reason they can't make money again if Parks and Rec and everyone else can think about how we could get money for docks." Jonathan Drury volunteered to help. Bill asked that the docks be on the agenda for the next meeting.

PARKS AND REC Grace Bankton was approved for membership to the commission. Parks and Rec now has 8 members. Connie Manke, new president, mentioned that the commission has not yet received a copy of its budget. She asked for a box in the office where P&R can pick up correspondence. Connie recommended that council approve Sharron May's application for the market master position.

OPTION TO BUY FORECLOSED PROPERTY The village, along with the township and the state, have the option to buy 234 Furnace Avenue for public use before it goes to auction. Council decided to turn down this option because of the amount of back taxes owed on the property (which would be the amount of the bid the Village would put in) and our general lack of funds. The township had already sent in their letter of refusal.

NEW MARKET MANAGER HIRED Matt Stapleton and Ross Thorsen of the Employee Relations Committee said they'd received feedback on the market master applicants and recommended a new village resident, Sue Oseland, who has already shown a lot of interest and volunteerism in the Village, having worked on the Life Saving Station, the *Elberta Alert*, and as beach cleanup organizer. Diane abstained from the voting because Sue works at her business. Council approved Sue for hire.

GRANT WRITING COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED Ross proposed and council approved a new committee to write and research possible grants. Laura Manville will oversee the committee and all projects will be brought to council for approval. The committee will consist of Jen Wilkins, Christine Walkons, and Sue Oseland, with Ross present for support.

NEW PORTA-JOHN SERVICE CONTRACT Council chose Ken-Jac's servicing proposal over Williams's. The hand-capped unit will cost \$120/mo. and the regular unit \$80/mo. Ken-Jac has vandalism insurance, whereas last year we were billed for vandalism. Initial locations for units and timing of cleanings were discussed. Connie requested that servicing at the Marina Park not be done during the Farmers' Market on Thursdays.

FIRE AND FIRST RESPONDER CONTRACTS SIGNED Eventually these contracts will be amended—they are twenty years old, according to Ken Holmes. For now, council authorized Diane to sign the contract for Fire Dept. services at \$13,172.63 per year, and a separate contract for first responders at \$2,234.69 per year. We split the cost of utilities and insurance for the fire department's use of the Community Building, and Frankfort pays \$250/mo for the add on to the building, which stores a truck.

feet to bedrock so they have to stay, and he would like to see a horse-shoe-shaped walkway around the inlet, which he thinks would be a big draw. Ken Holmes said the docks have been there a long time and "There's no reason they can't make money again if Parks and Rec and everyone else can think about how we could get money for docks." Jonathan Drury volunteered to help. Bill asked that the docks be on the agenda for the next meeting.

MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS Some siding needs to go up on the Life Saving Station, but otherwise it's ready and open for the season. All commended Ross and Sue Oseland on the work they've done there. Diane asked Ken Bonney to pop the letters off the Library that say "Library," because she said people often stop and try to get in there.

ACQUISITION OF M-168 Council gave signature authorization to Diane as president pro-tem to sign the memorandum of understanding with MDOT regarding the transfer of M-168 to the Village. The road, described as Frankfort Avenue, M-168, Furnace Avenue and Lake Street, a distance of about 0.95 miles, will come under Village control. Diane said it's amazing that a road that's only .95 miles has so many names, and she hopes we can change that to one name.

ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS As council's new master plan liaison, Linda said she has been attending planning commission meetings. "At the public hearing on April 3 they approved changes to the zoning ordinance. Scott Gest was present and assured us that the [Betsie Valley bike] trail will go through [Gest's] development area. There was a discussion of



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Remember When... With Ken

★ Portrait by Art Melendez



Small boats once flocked to the haven of the Mini Pond docks, providing a steady revenue stream. Should Elberta relaunch this idea now that we're dire financial straits?



This photo was taken in the fall of 1968. You can see that all the spaces are rented out. We even had a waiting list—as soon as a dock was vacated, it would be rented out the same day. The pilings were all hand-driven. Note the old sewer plant in the background at right. The Tiny Bubbles charter service was to the left, outside the frame of the picture. PHOTO BY KEN HOLMES



We wish **Lois Holmes** a speedy recovery. We hear from **Hannah Holmes** that she is up at Munson feeling a bit better as of Sunday. We send our best wishes to **Crystal Cicansky Smeltzer** while she too is up in treatment at Munson.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Michigan Press Women

The *Alert* has been honored with a first place and a second place finish in the

annual Michigan Press Women's journalism awards. **MPW president Carole Eberly** presented Emily Votruba, Carolee Ness, and Jennifer Wilkins (here behind the camera, as she frequently, brilliantly, is) with the two citations. Thanks to the whole *Alert* team for making our deeply local journalism effort such a success!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Shall we revive the birthday calendar? The *Alert* noticed with some excitement the great calendar published in 2002 by **Deryl**

Holmes—there's a copy in the Village Office. The calendar contains great historical photos and lists birthdays for what would seem to be nearly everyone in the Village. So the *Alert* is going to start compiling a list of birthdays for our current residents. Please send us your info, if you care to. We'll start now with a shoutout to **Pete Nemi**, who turned 14 on May 10, and **Charlie Hendershott**, who celebrated his 78th on May 4. Just another one of the ways in which small is beautiful here in E Town.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Library Millage passes... According to Sharyn Bower, the Gilmore Township Board will now appoint a representative to the Benzie Shores District Library Board.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Gastropod vs. Gastronom One truly intrepid bipedal forager we know recently made a startlingly pleasant discovery. He was hunting morels and found quite a large one. As he sliced open the stem with his pocketknife, however, he realized that he was not the first to the scene. A slug was inside, and he had dispatched it with his blade. Following his green cuisine ethic—you kilt it, you eat it—he popped the whole schmear in his mouth. "As soon as I ate it I felt this strange sea change," he said. The *Alert* had to ask: is that a good thing? "It was DELICIOUS," he said. Good to know.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Third Quarter Honor Roll We congrat-

ulate our Elberta students on their hard work! Morgan Banktson, Korin Smeltzer, Ainsley Stapleton (5th grade); Jackson Confer, Lorynn Banktson, Sasha Holtrey (7th grade); McEwen Stapleton, Levi Hubbard (8th grade); Merren Garber (9th grade); Hannah Holmes (10th grade); Tami Banktson (12th grade).

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
We're also proud of **Ellie Noffsinger's OM team** for placing 9th at the State Finals. "Not bad for rookie 3rd graders going up against 3-4-5th grade teams. Thanks to the parents for the privilege of coaching a great bunch of kids!" said coach Becky Noffsinger.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
North Elberta Enterprise Big Bob's



On May 12, the Betsie Valley Dance School performed a selection of ballet and tap numbers before a packed house at the high school auditorium. TOP ROW, FROM LEFT: Eliza Frary, Alanna Swander, Liberty Daugherty, Syerra Mills, Amaya Bolton, Miranda Guzman, Grace May, Madelyn Larsen, Victoria Lung, Kate May, and Sara Paris. Dance mistress Kelli Stapleton is holding Jetta Kelly. BOTTOM ROW: Madyson Charbonneau, Olivia Johnson, Stella Maue, Sophia Rusch, Annabelle MacRae, Natalie Miehke, Piper Burnard, Allison Balado, and Mia Jones (at least one photo is available with Miss Rusch facing front—this is a kinetic crowd!). Says Kelli: "I've been doing this for 6 years. It kills my Saturday mornings, but it is the most fun anyone can have." PHOTO BY MEAGHAN LARSEN

Up North Outfitters, a project of **Amanda and Dave Rommell**, is set to open with a fish boil and a bang on June 9 starting at noon in the old Firestone Building on Main St. in Frankfort. The new business will offer "four seasons of hunting and fishing gear, hunting and fishing consignment, live bait, gunsmith services and... INDOOR VIRTUAL ARCHERY!!!"

HAVE A NEWS ITEM YOU WANT BLASTED? Call or text 231-399-0098, send to **Elberta Alert Foghorn, PO Box 357, Elberta, MI 49628**, or write to **elberta.alert@gmail.com**, attn "Foghorn."

ELBERTA BEACH CONTROVERSY, cont'd
He believes the best way to prevent beach driving would be to set posts along the designated roadway.

On May 2, Eric VanDussen, during public comment at the Elberta Parks and Rec meeting (see page 3), said he had taken down the fence that day. A confrontation between Ken Bonney and VanDussen during that meeting is documented on Facebook by VanDussen.

Ken re-erected the fence a couple of days later and VanDussen removed it again. A third installation and subsequent de-installation followed (the *Alert* was not able to confirm by whom). At press time the road remains open.

On Thursday, May 10, VanDussen told this reporter that he had heard that a warrant for his arrest had been sent by one of the sheriff's deputies

to the prosecutor. "I hope they do arrest me," VanDussen said. "I'll put on a three-day trial. I'll subpoena everybody."

The *Alert* spoke with prosecutor John B. Daugherty, who said he couldn't comment on particular cases or whether or not he had received a police report.

According to Ken Holmes, the history of blocking the beach road against ORV use goes back as far as 1977, when he himself put up a gate across the road. Sand Products Corporation has also blocked the road in the past, and that structure was removed by members of the public, Holmes said. According to Ken Bonney and Suz McLaughlin, in separate accounts, signage installed to designate the road and warn against off-road driving has been repeatedly installed and removed in the past as well. The Village Council, in conjunction with Sand Products Corporation (which owns much of the critical dune acreage within the Village), the sheriff's office, and the DNR have met several times to discuss solutions, most recently in November of 2011.

As with most of Elberta's problems, lack of money is at the root of a vicious Catch-22. According to Ken Bonney, Elberta can't get street fund-

ing through Act 51 to maintain Lakeside Boulevard unless it's a year-round road—meaning the entire 4,000-some-foot stretch would have

continues on page 5

PUTNEY HEARING, cont'd

22. According to the County Clerk, it's a writ of mandamus seeking to compel the Village to issue either a land use permit or a special use permit.

The original land-use permit hearing, held April 25, ended abruptly when it became clear that the ZBA was not properly constituted, because Ken Holmes, as sole member of council on the Planning Commission, had recused himself from the proceedings. Ken is one of the people named in Loy Putney's lawsuit against the Village. As Putney's attorney, Brad Putney,

member of the ZBA also be a member of the Planning Commission. Ed Roy asked at the time whether the Putneys wanted to continue with the hearing anyway and they replied they would rather proceed with a properly constituted board.

Ken Holmes also recused himself from the May 4 meeting.

Putney et al. filed a formal complaint to the Michigan Department of Civil Rights on March 15, alleging that council was discriminatory in denying Putney a land-use permit. Roy's response to the Department of Civil Rights, obtained by the *Alert* from Roy, stated that the zoning administrator, following procedure, had denied the permit, not the council. The letter outlines how the appeals process is indeed being pursued properly in accordance with our zoning ordinance.—*Emily Votruba*

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★ ★ ★
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Brain-storming the Beach

MAY PARKS AND RECREATION MEETING By Jennifer Wilkins First of all, a big thank-you to the council for approving the new exercise equipment and picnic tables! The fitness equipment should be installed by the end of this month.

Sue Oseland, the new market master, expressed her admiration for the work Meg Louwsma and Andrea Burkes did to establish and the market and for their fantastic record keeping and advice. She thanked Emily Votruba for compiling and sending out the Farmers Market Application Packets for 2012 [Sharyn Bower helped with this too]. Seven of the 22 vendors had replied at the time of the meeting. Sue described how we'll work with Grow Benzie so that Michigan Bridge Cards can be used at the Market.

During public comment Eric VanDussen (who was video recording as he was speaking) inquired as to why the Beach road (Lakeside Blvd.) was closed. He said there was no lawful authority to close the road, it was dedeed to the public, and he would like to see documentation proving otherwise. Eric proceeded to show members a plat map that showed Lakeside Blvd. He said he had been in contact with the sheriff, who said that Ken Bonney is not a constable. Eric

said that the decision was not made by the full village council and that the public was not warned in advance. He then admitted to having dismantled the gate just before the meeting. Scott Gest made comments regarding road right of ways and easements, and council member Bill Soper asked Eric what he was more concerned about personally, preservation of the critical dune area or the road closure. Eric said he was concerned about both issues.

The commission discussed solutions to the Beach situation, including informative signage; a public meeting to discuss and inform the public on the status and possible solutions; and applying for grants to acquire proper guardrails and updating the road surface.

Michele Canaert had mentioned that she has shovels for the removal of the invasive babies breath plant so that a removal date can be planned. The time to do it is now.

The Elberta Historic Preservation Committee presented a mission statement and preliminary project plan for the Apron Saving project. The commission voted to pres-

ent it as amended to council. Emily discussed her communication with council member Diane Jenks regarding storing historical artifacts in the roundhouse area. The list of desired artifacts was cut back. The State Historic Preservation Office SHPO was called per Diane's request, but there had been no response from them at the time these minutes were compiled.

Bill S. is researching the purchase of a popcorn machine. P&R will sell merchandise at Solstice to raise funds to continue updating equipment in the Parks.

Ross Thorsen's BYOB LSS fundraiser was discussed (see flier insert).

2012 BEACH CLEANUPS
 Weds., May 16: 9 am
 Weds., June 20: 9 am
 July TBA
 Weds., Aug. 15: 9 am
 Thurs., Sept. 12: 9 am
 *NOTE NEW START TIME
 Meet in the Beach parking lot!
 Coordinator: Sue Oseland (616) 403-4971

BEACH REPORT By Sue Oseland On Wednesday, April 18, the first in a series of 2012 Elberta Beach clean-ups took place. The beach itself didn't look too bad, so we decided to clean up the beach road, which really needed some help! In three hours, our group of three filled up 18 garbage bags of trash! Plus a living room chair, child car seat, toilet seat, and lots of car parts. We also found two wallets, a pistol, and many bags full of rotten, nasty fish carcasses... Oh, we a \$10 bill and a \$5 bill. So, along with many, many pop and beer cans/bottles, we made out pretty good!

See the chart above for the next meetup. Just bring a pair of gloves—we've got trash bags and these wonderful gadgets that pick up the junk so you don't have to mess up your back. Hope to see you soon! ♣

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MAY / JUNE

Wm. Lamb, Joyfield farmer and resident for 40 years [passed away] at the age of 61. He came here from Canada and was married to Mary Smeltzer for 24 years and had two sons: John and Frank. Hank Werkman has gone on the A.A. carferry no. 4 as wireless operator.
 —The Elberta Alert, May 17, 1912

Date	Event	Details	Location	Time
17	ELBERTA FARMERS' MARKET	Join us for opening day! And every Thursday after that until mid-October.	Marina Park/Farmers' Market Pavilion	7:30 am-12 noon
	VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING	On the agenda: Mini Pond Park dock removal discussion, and much, much more.	Village Community Bld. 401 First St.	7 pm
19	COMMUNITY DINNER AT ELBERTA'S BEST CHURCH	Beef tips and noodles, biscuits and pie, plus good friends, at Elberta United Methodist.	555 Lincoln Ave.	4 pm-6 pm (third Saturdays)
23	E-DRINKS	A gathering of business owners, budding entrepreneurs, and others to incubate ideas and imagine local economic opportunities.	BayView Grille, 727 Main St., Frankfort	5 pm-7 pm
24	"MEEK'S CUTOFF" AT THE GARDEN THEATER	Award-winning film starring Michelle Williams as a pioneer woman on the Oregon Trail, based on a true story. Bruce Ogilvie speaks before the film on local connections to this history. The film is presented in honor of Joyce Skinner and Mel Schuman.	Garden Theater, Main St., Frankfort	6 pm-8 pm
	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING	Open meeting with Sheriff Rory Heckmann to discuss county security issues.	Sheriff's Office, 505 S. Michigan Ave., Beulah	6 pm (fourth Thursdays)
	LAKES TO LAND INITIATIVE INFORMATION MEETING	"The Initiative is a progressive, joint effort of four townships in Manistee County and four townships and Frankfort in Benzie County.... The communities will prepare individual Master Plans and Recreation Plans, then use them to develop collaborative strategies for the future and to attract public and private investment to turn plans into reality.	Frankfort-Elberta Elementary Gym	7 pm
26	KIDS SOLSTICE FEST FUNDRAISER	Enjoy a preview of the kind of fun kids' stuff Solstice Fest has to offer and help raise money for it all! Local hot dogs and beverages, raffles, relay games, and more.	Waterfront Park Pavilion	12 noon
	BACK DECK DANCE PARTY AT THE CABBAGE SHED	DJ Fluff presides over this open-air dancestravaganza.	198 Frankfort Ave.	10 pm
30	PUBLIC HEARING ON LAND USE PERMIT DENIAL	The Village Council, as zoning board of appeals, hosts discussion on the land use for the Putney/Bay Valley Inn property.	Village Community Building, 401 First St.	7 pm
31	BENZIE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OPEN HOUSE	Come learn what the Conservation District is doing for our human and wild community.	Conservation District Office, Main St., Beulah	4 pm-6 pm
1	SOCK HOP AT THE CABBAGE SHED	Dine and dance to classics from the 50s and 60s of the last century.	198 Frankfort Ave.	6 pm-9 pm
6	PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING	Regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission; note new meeting day and place, and new president, Connie Manke	Elberta Library 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (first Wednesdays)
9	BENZIE COUNTY RECYCLING SPECIAL COLLECTION	Oil-based paints, fluorescent bulbs, household batteries, expired medicines and medical waste, pesticides, electronics, tires, and styrofoam. No charge to Benzie County residents for any hazardous waste or electronic equipment. There is a charge for tires. Appointments are required. 231-882-0554	404 Parkview Ln., Incoe Bld, FFort	9 am-12 noon
12	GILMORE TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING	Regular meeting of the board of Gilmore Township.	Elberta Library 704 Frankfort Ave.	7 pm (second Tuesdays)

Rep Rap: Allen O'Shea

By Eric Pyne

ALLEN O'SHEA is seeking the Democratic nomination to represent the state legislature's 101st District (Leelanau, Benzie, Manistee, and Mason counties). "I called Dan Scripps and said he had to run because I couldn't sit with the abuse coming out of Lansing," O'Shea said during our interview. But Dan Scripps is not running this year. Scripps and his wife have a tougher job—a new baby!

Allen's day job is running a family business in Copemish, distributing windows, wind turbines, and solar panels. I asked him about the controversy over Duke Energy's wind farm. "The community made a decision that they didn't want it," O'Shea said. "I'm an advocate for renewable energy, and we have the wind here." He feels there's potential in this district for "community wind," in which local investors pool their money to build a jointly owned turbine. The turbine would be for a specific purpose, like powering a sewage plant. Educating the community

LOGBOOK: LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Village Council

The following members of the Village Board of Trustees are up for reelection this November: Laura Manville (Treasurer), Ross Thorsen, Bill Soper, Ken Holmes. Deadline for filing candidate petitions is August 14 (the Village doesn't have a primary). A minimum of 6 signatures is required.

Gilmore Township Board

Terms are up for the entire board. May 15 was the deadline for filing petitions: Carl Noffsinger (Supervisor), Ron Beyette, Doug Holmes, Sharyn Bower (Clerk), Laura Manville (Treasurer)

about wind energy and finding acceptable sites is O'Shea's current focus.

Mr. O'Shea has been involved with education for many years, serving as Manistee Intermediate School District board treasurer, board president at Kaleva Norman Dixon Schools, and sitting on the board of Shoreline Charter School. "Proposition A [the tax plan that provides school funding] is no longer working," said O'Shea. "Our schools are using 1995 dollars. What year is this?" He remembers when schools were a local cultural focus. "Business [in Michigan] is chipping away at the fringes" of the school community. He opposes privatizing schools, saying, "Charter schools


just skim off the cream of the students and move failing problems around."

O'Shea feels that corporations aren't taxed enough, and that senior citizens are taxed too much. He said, "When I am elected, I will repeal the pension tax. And as a businessman, I know how corporations get out of paying taxes. By the way, corporations AREN'T people!"

The O'Sheas' children attended the Elberta Elementary when it was held in the building that later became the Bay Valley Inn. He said he didn't know much about the Putney worker housing proposal, but he said, "Farmers have a very tight timetable to harvest when crops are ready, and they need workers." He expressed con-

cern about the Department of Homeland Security's Everify system, which employers may use to check workers' legal status. "Workers should have a decent place to live. I support the community decision process," O'Shea said.

O'Shea said emergency manager laws have been around a long time, but "I'm against bringing in outside henchmen that no one knows." He said the more recent emergency manager law undercuts communities and individuals for the sake of controlling exposure to bad financial decision making. "There have been some blatant cases of local governments mishandling money." But O'Shea feels that the enforcement of previously existing laws was adequate to the problem.

O'Shea wants the primary race with Derek Bailey to be about credentials, ambition, and intentions. "I will give 200 percent," he said, planning to serve three terms in the State Legislature and then retire. "I'll be 75 then." Now 69, he says he's healthy and ready to listen to and serve the 101st. Don't forget to vote in the August 7 primary. 

The Alert does not endorse candidates or parties and is eager to run writing on other candidates and races. elberta.alert@gmail.com / 231-399-0098.

Culture Bluffs Book Review

By Bill Buck 

Doug Stanton, *Horse Soldiers* (Scribner, 2009)

NO—THIS IS NOT a review of an old John Wayne cavalry movie. This is about a book by a writer from Northern Michigan—Elberta country. It is a war story. It is a story of exceptionally brave people. It is not all about men, although some very tough men are core characters. The events in it are now more than ten years old, yet its message today for any reader in Elberta is to deliver a better current understanding of another place, with a daily reality and way of life almost unimaginable in our bucolic existence.

Doug Stanton is a neighbor from Traverse City. He is a strong presence in our cultural environment, with position in our local festivals, at Interlochen, and through his successful National Writers Series, in addition to his literary output. His research is superb and he has used those results to put together this true account of heroes of our time.


These heroes avoid public notice. One or more could be from your hometown, but you might never know (Travis Lovegrove of Elberta is currently deployed to Afghanistan and has been to the Persian Gulf three times on the USS *Vicksburg*). In this book, they instead were from places like "a holler in West Virginia" and "a hardscrabble farm in Minnesota." They were members of the U.S. Army's Fifth Special Forces Group, the clandestine troops trained to ultimate physical condition and instantaneously ready to be inserted into guerrilla warfare existence, anywhere in the world. They left their homes and families quietly, without advance warning. If they returned, there were no bands playing.

They left days after September 11, 2001. They were the first response to the war on Al Qaeda declared by president Bush on September 12. They went to Afghanistan as troops on the ground there, because that is what secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld wanted, and the president approved.

Their mission was one of support for the tribal chiefs who were leading an upris-

ing against the Taliban, which had some Al Qaeda support forces. They went to direct the massive American airpower against the Taliban, working on the ground, living and moving with the tribesmen in treacherous, unfamiliar terrain. The book describes in splendid detail and with great suspense how they succeeded—first in earning the confidence of battle-hardened warriors and their leaders, and then moving into skirmishes and mountainside battles and finishing with an ultimate conflagration to wrest control of the key city named Mazar-i-Sharif and liberate an oppressed Afghan people.

Their movements required skills for which they were unprepared and—hence the book's title—they had to join forces with men on horseback. Some of them had rarely seen a horse, let alone mounted and ridden one into battle. If there can be humor in dire circumstances, the descriptions of their learning curves to get on and control these wild beasts in a march across dangerous mountain trails does indeed bring some smiles and chuckles to the reader as he turns the page to learn what happens next.

Horse Soldiers spent over three months on the *New York Times* Best Seller list for hardcover nonfiction, and can be found at the Benzie Shores District Library, in Frankfort. 

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ELBERTA BEACH CONTROVERSY, cont'd

to be plowed and sanded during the winter—at tremendous cost and little use, since no one lives on Lakeside year-round. This is why Elberta doesn't claim the road on the Act 51 map. Furthermore, to grade and improve the road with gravel and/or mark it with posts as an aid to law enforcement will be very expensive.

Ken says that as street custodian, he has been given the authority by council to close streets in the case of emergencies and when roads are in need of repair. "The gate is down. I've been told not to put it back up by the sheriff's department. That gate was 100 percent on Village property. [VanDussen] should go to jail for destruction of public property. If there had been any police down there to see him do it, he would have gone to jail. It's a piss-poor way the sheriff's department is serving the Village."

A DNR pamphlet on Michigan's coastal dunes states the following: "Of the 275,000 acres of sand dunes in Michigan, 70,000 acres were designated [as] Critical Dune Areas (CDAs)[.] recognized as a "unique, irreplaceable and fragile resource that provide

significant recreational, economic, scientific, geological, scenic, botanical, educational, agricultural, and ecological benefits to the people of this state and to people from other states and countries who visit this resource." The consensus among most residents seems to be: let's hope they stay that way.—Emily Votruba



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BLAST From the FUTURE!

Local history, topics, and interviews by an Elberta teen

Beach

By Merren Garber



Elberta Beach, morning of Saturday, May 12, 2012. PHOTO BY JENNIFER WILKINS

Your soft gentle breeze ripples across the water and tugs at the curls in my hair. Feeling the small grains of sand in between my toes with every step I take makes me feel like I'm in paradise. And which I am, since the beauty of this place enchants me to never want to leave. So here I stay from sunrise to sunset, cocooned in the warmth of the sun's fragile rays, forgetting about the world around me. But captivated in yours.

People say you are dangerous because of your waters' tide, but they don't know that it's just the way you are. They don't appreciate you so they leave their unwanted treasures behind. Leaving them so the sand beneath me can bury them away, hardly ever to be seen again.

But to me, hearing the waves crash and roll onto your shore is like a sweet and gentle melody to my ears. And the dune grass I lie upon tickles and caresses my face. You have your own unique beauty that I cannot ever get enough of.

Alert editor Merren Garber is a freshman at Frankfort-Elberta High School.

COUNCIL REPORT, cont'd

NEW PARKS EQUIPMENT Jen Wilkins and Connie received approval to spend money on some picnic tables for the Marina Park and exercise equipment for Anderson Park. The \$2,500 for exercise equipment covers a pull-up bar station, a cross-country-skiing-style machine, and a situps bench. The six picnic tables (4 are handicapped accessible) will also cost \$2,500. Jen is also ordering 4 new strap seats and a handicapped accessible seat for the swings. Parks and Rec will raise funds to replenish their coffers from these expenses by offering to router people's names into the new tables. The old playground equipment in Anderson Park will be removed. They will also use the \$700 given by the Gleaners. Linda asked if Park and Rec had enough money in its account. Jen said they hadn't received a treasurer's report yet but that the last she knew there was about \$7,000 in the account. Diane said, "We spent well over \$150K for playground equipment at the Waterfront Park, so we know how expensive it can be. I think it's exciting to see changes in the Village that will help the residents and visitors. This is money Parks and Rec has raised; it's not tax dollars that are being spent."

PUBLIC COMMENT Emily Votruba reported that the Historical Preservation Committee

would meet soon with Luedtke Engineering and Scott Gest to discuss the wishlist of items to be salvaged and logistics. Ken Bonney said he wanted to see the list so he could check the items for contamination. Emily went to Grant Brown's excellent lecture on the history of the car ferries at Arcadia Lutheran Church, which was attended by about 100 people. She handed out copies of the Alert and tried to drum up interest in the preservation project.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ GILMORE TWP BOARD MEETING, MAY 9

SHORT GRACE STAIRWAY The project has begun and is being paid for with a \$50,000 grant (\$25,000 with a \$25,000 match, mostly in-kind). Laura Manville said the stairway is way under budget but said she needed more information on volunteer work already done because it needs to be reported to the grant issuer. Several people working on the project have contracted bad cases of poison ivy but the plant has mostly been removed at this point. Disabled-access requirements will be met with a viewing platform—wheelchairs will not actually be able to get down to the beach.

COUNTY COMMISSION CANDIDATE Adrian Poulisse of Nugent Rd. is running for the new district 7 (the biggest in Benzie), which includes Gilmore, Blaine, Joyfield, and Weldon. He's declared as a Republican but says

he's backed by a bipartisan coalition. He's a member of the planning commission locally and working on the Lakes to Land Initiative. adrian4benzie@gmail.com.

PLANNING & ZONING Dennis Holcombe said the Lakes to Land Initiative will hold two community meetings, on May 24 at Frankfort-Elberta Elementary and June 14 at the Life Saving Station. As part of the Initiative he met with Todd Kalish of the DNR (which is the largest landowner in the township) to give him a tour. Kalish expressed interest in helping with the phragmites problem and also seemed excited about reestablishing a boat launch in the Mini Pond Park. Holcombe said it would be easier to promote this idea if Elberta joined the L2L Initiative—the associated communities are developing an overarching recreation plan. Gilmore and Blaine are discussing working together on their respective master plans, which might save some time and effort, since there is a lot of common ground. They would still end up with separate plans.

COUNTY COMMISSION REPORT Marcia Stobie said commissioners are discussing a brownfield authority for the county. Townships can pass a resolution to join up as they wish, as issues come up. Laura said Elberta has its own brownfield authority. The township could use the county's authority on certain projects. Stobie said the authority's purpose is not to condemn parcels. Blighted, not just contaminated, areas may also be included. The Commissioners passed a resolution that they would do a restore and renew millage, not an increase, for the Commission on Aging, which contracts with the Council on Aging for senior services. Stobie said many counties fund home health care at least partially by a millage, whereas ours is through fundraising and private donations. Home health care is a very low percentage of the Council on Aging's budget.

CEMETERY Flags for Memorial Day are standing by at Sharyn Bower's house. Ron Beyette and Carl Noffsinger cut up the huge tree that was down and John

Keillor brought a truck to haul it away. (It was too big for Ron to carry.)



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